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The Importance of Mammography

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The American Cancer Society estimates that 232,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in 2014.

Did you know that Breast Cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women?

The American Cancer Society estimates that 232,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in 2014. Add that number to the approximately 62,000 new cases of carcinoma in situ, and you can see the need for early detection. The American Cancer Society recommends monthly self-breast exams and annual screening mammograms starting at age 40, a policy followed by all US Naval Hospitals.

Many women want to know why a breast ultrasound cannot be



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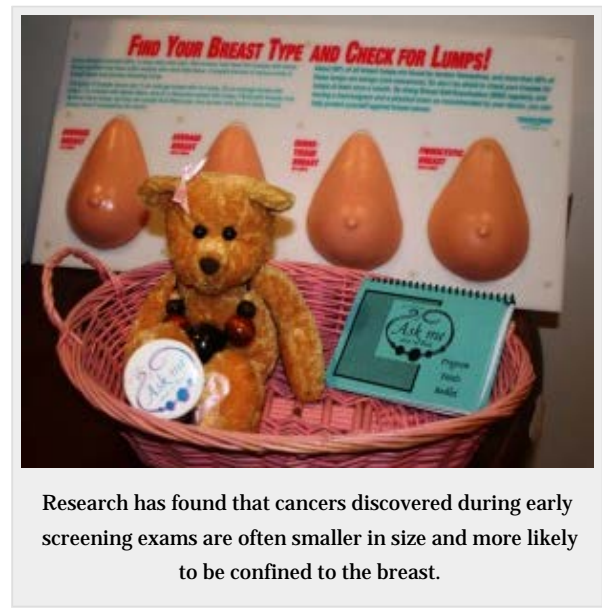
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used instead of a mammogram.

Unfortunately, breast ultrasound can only differentiate a solid mass vs. a fluid filled mass, and is unable to pick up micro-calcifications which are commonly found in breast cancer lesions. A recent case two years ago here at NHB comes to mind.

A woman in her late 30's presented with a palpable lump in her left breast and both the patient and her provider only wanted a breast ultrasound to be performed. As per our policy at NHB, a diagnostic bilateral mammogram and left breast ultrasound was performed. The palpable lump in her left breast turned out to be a simple cyst, however, calcifications in her left breast subsequently biopsied demonstrated Ductal Carcinoma in Situ. Had the patient only received a breast ultrasound, that cancer diagnosis would have gone unchecked until it developed into a large palpable mass or the woman obtained a screening mammogram.



Research has found that cancers discovered during early screening exams are often smaller in size and more likely to be confined to the breast.

The risk of getting breast cancer increases as a woman ages. Research has found that cancers discovered during early screening exams are often smaller in size and more likely to be confined to the breast. When considering these two factors (the size and likelihood of spread), the importance of early detection becomes obvious.

Finally, a bit of good news: while a woman has a 3 percent chance of dying from Breast Cancer, incidence rates have been declining since 2000. This is likely due to earlier detection

through screening mammograms, increased awareness, and improved quality in treatment.

The Mammography Department at Naval Hospital Bremerton is proud to provide exceptional breast imaging to our valued patients. Please ask your provider to place a screening mammogram consult if you are over 40 and have not had a mammogram in the past year, or if you are less than 40 but have increased risk factors, or if you have a palpable concern. We offer walk-in exams as well – there's no good excuse not to take care of your breast health!

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